

**CITY OF HOUSTON
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

***VOLUNTARY VISITABILITY PROGRAM
GUIDELINES***

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

In accordance with City of Houston Ordinance # _____, City Council established the Voluntary Visitability Program ("Program"), the Guidelines of which are established herein:

- a. The visitable home must meet the design specifications established by City of Houston Ordinance #2003-1239 (the "Visitability Ordinance"), Attachment One;
- b. This Program applies to new construction of single family homes only;
- c. The visitable home must be sold to an individual or individuals occupying the home as a primary residence;
- d. The sales price of the visitable home must be at or below the HUD median sales price of homes sold in the area, as established by the U.S. Department of HUD, and corresponding with the home price standard used in the City's Home Buyer Assistance Program;
- e. The reimbursement amount is \$400 per home;
- f. The builder may either (1) secure a reservation of visitability funds for a specified number of homes to be built in accordance with standards established by the Visitability Ordinance, or (2) request reimbursement of visitability funds after construction and sale of the visitable home;
- g. To participate in the Voluntary Visitability Program, the builder and its principals must be current with its property tax payments to the City, in accordance with the City's ordinance # 2003-0318, relating to tax delinquency;
- h. Funds for reimbursement to builders shall be limited to funds budgeted for that purpose by action of City Council; and,
- i. Reservations of visitability funds and the reimbursement of visitability funds are subject to the availability of the budgeted funds.

Eligible visitability costs will cover the basic design features listed in the scope of the Visitability Ordinance, which will allow a mobility-impaired person to visit a home.

The Voluntary Visitability Program is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development ("DHCD" or "Department"). All contacts in relation to this Program should be made to:

City of Houston
Department of Housing and Community Development
601 Sawyer Street, 4th Floor
Houston, Texas 77007
ATTN: Assistant Director of Housing and Economic Development Division

II. RESERVATION OF VISITABILITY FUNDS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION

A builder may contact the Department to make a reservation of visitability funds for homes to be built for homebuyers. Required information will be submitted as described below. The builder will be pre-qualified, and a reservation of visitability funds will be made in accordance with these Guidelines. The reservation will be in the form of a letter signed by the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development. Reimbursement will be made after the home is sold, and upon compliance with the procedures established in Section III.a of these Guidelines, below. If the reserved funds are not requested within a timeframe established by the reservation letter, the reservation will become null and the funds will be made available for other reservations.

In order to establish a reservation, the builder will submit the following information, by a letter of request, to the Housing and Community Development Department before the construction of the visitable home.

- Name, address and telephone number of the builder and contact person, including list of all officers and directors;
- Completed and executed "Affidavit of Ownership and Control", relating to tax delinquency;
- Summary of entity's experience in building affordable homes and representative list of affordable housing developments;
- Name and location of the planned development, estimated number of affordable homes with visitability features to be constructed and sold, as well as the total number of homes to be built in the development; and
- A copy of the building permit issued by the Planning & Development Code Enforcement Division for each visitable home. The permit should state that the new home is to be "visitable".

After the Department reviews the information and approves the builder for reimbursement, a reservation letter will be issued and an appropriate amount of reimbursement funds will be reserved. The reservation will expire the date the submitted building permit expires, which is typically 180 days from the date the building permit is purchased. Upon completion of the work, the builder will submit the required information according to the instructions for requesting reimbursement of eligible visitability costs, in Section III.a, below. **All reservations and reimbursements are subject to the availability of funds.**

III. REQUESTS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

a. Securing Reimbursement of Reserved Visitability Funds

A builder who has previously established a reservation may submit a request for reimbursement of visitability costs after the home is sold. Requests must be

submitted prior to the deadline established by the reservation letter; otherwise, the reservation will be cancelled and the funds returned to the program. The request for reimbursement may be in the form of a letter or invoice, with the following information provided:

- Number of homes being sought for reimbursement;
- A list of the City project numbers, as designated on the building permits, which corresponds to the appropriate property addresses; and
- Copy of the executed closing statement identifying the Seller and providing proof each home for which reimbursement is requested has been:
 - a) sold to an individual or individuals occupying the home as their primary residence, and
 - b) the home has been sold at or below a price determined by the Department of Housing and Community Development in compliance with HUD guidelines, and corresponding with the City's Home Buyer's Assistance Program.
- Executed Request for Payment Form

b. Securing Reimbursement After Construction and Sale of Visitable Home (No Prior Reservation)

A builder may contact the DHCD to arrange for reimbursement of eligible visitability costs after completing the construction and sale of affordable homes that have the required features. Reimbursement is contingent upon adequate funds being available to cover the costs, the entity providing the information requested below, and compliance with the Visitability Ordinance, and these Guidelines.

The Developer may submit a request for reimbursement of visitability costs to the Housing and Community Development Department in the form of a letter or invoice, and should include the following as documentation:

- Name, address and telephone number of the builder and contact person, including list of all officers and directors;
- Completed and executed "Affidavit of Ownership and Control", relating to tax delinquency;
- Summary of builder's experience in building affordable homes and a representative list of affordable housing developments;
- Name and location of the development, actual number of affordable homes with visitability features constructed and sold, as well as the total number of homes to be built in the development;
- A copy of the building permit issued by the Planning & Development Code Enforcement Division for each visitable home. The permit should state that the new home is to be "visitable".

- Copy of the executed closing statement identifying the Seller and providing proof each home for which reimbursement is requested has been:
 - a) sold to an individual or individuals occupying the home as their primary residence, and
 - b) the home has been sold at or below a price determined by the Department of Housing and Community Development in compliance with HUD guidelines, and corresponding with the City's Home Buyer's Assistance Program; and
- Executed Request for Payment Form

Requests for reimbursement must be submitted no later than 180 days after the issuance of the building permit. Requests for reimbursement are to be submitted not more frequently than one per month, with payments anticipated to be made within 30 days of submission of all requested information and invoice, and approval of the invoice in accordance with City policy. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted for not less than five homes at a time, unless the development consists of less than five homes.

CITY OF HOUSTON
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTION
Request for Payment Form

CONTRACTOR:	PROJECT TITLE:	RESERVATION NUMBER(S):
CONTACT:	Voluntary Visitability Program	
MAILING ADDRESS:	TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER:	EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD :
		FROM: TO:

INVOICE NUMBER	DATE OF INVOICE	PAYEE AND DESCRIPTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES	AMOUNT

We hereby certify that the above-mentioned goods and services have been received, that the quantity , quality and price thereof have been verified and that they were for use solely on the project and contract shown.

PREPARED BY: _____ DATE: _____

SIGNATURE OF SUBCONTRACTOR: _____ DATE: _____

PROJECT MANAGER, HCDD: _____ DATE: _____

FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTION, HCDD: _____ DATE: _____